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THE MINUTES

OF THE

FEDERATION OF SYNAGOGUES

1887-1912.

THE MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION OF SYNAGOGUES.

A

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' REVIEW.

BY

JOSEPH E. BLANK.

"In the progress of our lives we believe we can, of our own volition, regulate our affairs, and select our own activities and diversions, but, in point of fact, examined closely, we find that we are impelled to promote and to accomplish only the purposes and propensities of the times."—*Goethe.*

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1912

To

THE REVERED MEMORY OF

MONTAGU SAMUEL MONTAGU,

FIRST BARON SWAYTHLING ז"ל

FOUNDER, AND FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS ACTING PRESIDENT, OF THE FEDERATION OF SYNAGOGUES.

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FOREWORD.

The completion of the first twenty-five years of the existence of the Federation of Synagogues suggests a suitable period for stocktaking, for a review of its manifold activities, giving an opportunity for going over old ground to seek anew guiding paths to broad roads ahead.

Truly quoth Ecclesiastes: יש דבר שיאמר ראה זה חדש הוא—"Is there anything whereof it may be be said, see this is new"? The communal problems of to-day are the old problems, some in seeming new guise; but such as they are, might they not have been moulded to other shapes had the controlling power taken different direction?

The seed widely sown by the Federation has happily borne good fruit, but surely the harvest would have been still more bounteous and opportune had the seed fallen betimes on more receptive soil, receiving sunrays of encouragement, rather than frigid blasts of chilling wind, vivifying dew drops, rather than destructive showers.

"Sowing is not so difficult as harvesting." It cannot be gainsaid that almost throughout the cycle

of its existence the treatment extended to the Federation by an existing institution has been, not that of a co-worker in the communal field, but rather that of an intruder, to be either forcibly ejected or cold-shouldered out by discouragement, to be got rid of —anyway.

Fortunately the Federation was too self-reliant for such a wish to be gratified. Let imagination provide a picture of the communal conditions to-day, had the Federation of Synagogues not borne its part in the contemporary life of Jewry! What would have been the effect had the great mass of opinion of the less wealthy, but not less earnest, Jewish working classes remained unorganised and formless, rather than guided and controlled? By what channels would this force have made itself effective had not the Federation provided a safety valve for those sincerely held beliefs—an outlet for this vast and hitherto untrained, but surely valuable, communal endeavour, a means for confining its activities to cautious yet progressive movements? Has not working-class Jewry proved itself thoroughly capable of self-government, of self-restraint, and of evolving a sound constructive policy?

How different to-day might have been the aspect of some of the communal problems, had the views of the Federation received more prompt recognition and encouragement? Had the Federation not

been kept waiting by the United Synagogue for twelve years, knocking at the portals of the Shechita Board כעני בפתח "like a beggar at the door," the opposition Shechita Board of the Machzeke Hadass, with all its attendant troubles, *might* have been avoided. A different reception of the proposals made to the United Synagogue for cheaper funerals *might* have obviated the necessity for the establishment of the Federation Burial Society.

It is possible that a more far-sighted and effective method of dealing with the problems raised at the time by the representations of the Chedorim Committee to the Jews' Free School *might* have better equipped a large proportion of the present generation against the prevailing materialistic tendencies of the age by arming them with a fuller knowledge of Hebrew, and of the faith, and the tenets of their fathers. It will probably be still more readily conceded that earlier co-operation with the evening Hebrew and Religious Class organizations would have provided ampler security against overworking the children; other treatment of the Federation's suggestions for providing for the medical needs of the Jewish poor *might* have rendered still less excusable a similar provision by the missionary perverting agencies, and *might* by intelligent anticipation have rendered entirely unnecessary the agitation for a Jewish Hospital; a solution by the authorities of the United Synagogue

of the financial questions raised at the last election of Chief Rabbi, a greater regard for the protest then made by the Federation, *might* have prevented the gathering of the present thunderclouds.

It may be suggested that it is "easy to prophesy after the event," but it was certainly *not* the Federation which was wanting in prevision, which—not "after the event," but at repeated intervals, on many occasions—endeavoured to focus communal attention upon these many-sided pressing problems!

No attempt has been made in this review to offer a chronology; little reference is made to the amalgamation of synagogues, or the erection of buildings; to the rejection of synagogues which do not conform to standard building requirements until structural defects be remedied, or to the large financial grants for various purposes; movements rather than persons—save where the latter are essential to a proper understanding of the activities associated with their names—are given a place in this sketch. Little appears except what is recorded in the Minute Books; minor matters have been lightly touched upon or entirely passed over, and prominence given only to such questions as affect the body communal rather than to internal details of synagogal life.

It is not without considerable diffidence that this brief recapitulation of the experiences of the

Federation of Synagogues during the first twenty-five years of its existence is submitted—for maybe we all, to-day, are too near to the picture to appreciate its true value. Are there not lessons to be learned from the past whereby its pitfalls may be avoided in the future? It behoves us all at the present juncture, to look with hope to the future and in all goodwill to emphasise the points of amity and union rather than to dwell upon those of dissension and disintegration! It is essential, above all, that there be "more light," revealing to the workers in the communal field that there is an expanse, sufficiently generous for allowing free play to *all* who seek to garner in the vineyard of the Lord, and to ingather the harvest to His glory.

הנה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

J.E.B.

119 Farleigh Road, N.

מ'ש'ק *October 5th*, $\frac{5673}{1912}$

THE MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION OF SYNAGOGUES:

A TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' REVIEW.

On Sunday, October 16th, 1887, a meeting of members of minor synagogues and Chevras, which was destined to have important results in moulding communal history, was held at the Spital Square Synagogue, at which Mr. Samuel Montagu, M.P., presided, when the following resolutions were unanimously carried :—

> "That it is desirable for the Chevras to become Federated for certain clearly defined objects."
>
> "That a representative of every Chevra or Minor Synagogue in East London be invited to attend a preliminary meeting to be held at the Spital Square Synagogue on Sunday, November 6th, at 3 o'clock, to discuss plans for a Federation of the Chevras."

The enormous addition to East End Jewry resulting from the immigration of those hounded out of their native land by the Russian persecutions and massacres of the early eighties necessarily changed the previous homogeneity of the East End.

Chevras sprang up with mushroom-like rapidity, refugees from various localities creating in London centres for meeting with their old "townsmen." "East was East and West was West" with a vengeance, the latter more or less regarding the former—outside membership of the United Synagogue—as having to "be provided for" on eleemosynary lines.

The preponderating East End Jewry had practically no effective share in communal affairs and no organisation for voicing its views or making its influence felt. Dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs was general; rumblings, low but deep, forecasting threatening storms and eruptions, manifested themselves from time to time, and there were open threats of opposition movements and institutions.

It was Samuel Montagu's genius which saw the need for creating the corporate spirit, and the appropriate organisation for uniting the hitherto isolated Jewish bodies in East London. Thus was the Federation formally called into being. The preliminary meeting was held on Sunday, November 6th, 1887, when it was agreed to call the new organisation by the title of the Federation of Minor Synagogues, and to proceed to elect a Board of Delegates. Soon afterwards the word "Minor" was eliminated from the title and the objects adopted modified on the following lines:—

I. To provide or render available to the members of the Federation the services of a Minister

or Dayan certified as holding orthodox opinions by the Ecclesiastical Authorities.

II. To endeavour to lessen the number of Charity Funerals by negotiating with the United Synagogue, or with others, for Burials at moderate cost.

III. To obtain and to maintain direct representation at the Board of Shechita.

IV. To obtain and to maintain direct representation at the Board of Deputies.

V. To obtain and to maintain direct representation at the Board of Guardians.

VI. To promote by other means the interests of the Federated Synagogues.

The first meeting of the elected Board was held on December 4th, 1887, Mr. Samuel Montagu in the chair. Lord Rothschild was elected President; Mr. Samuel Montagu, Vice-President; Messrs. H. Landau and I. Weber, Treasurers, and Mr. J. E. Blank, Secretary "for one year." At this first Board Meeting sixteen synagogues, with an aggregate membership of about one thousand, were represented. The next Board Meeting, the second, was held on January 16th, 1888, and was unique, in so far as

Lord Rothschild himself presided over the gathering and signed the Minutes of the previous meeting.

The new-born organization proved to be lusty, and from its birth gave evidence of the sound constitution and robust health which enabled it to pass through a somewhat exciting and critical infancy, through adolescence, to the attainment of a vigorous majority.

One of the earliest public duties devolving upon the Secretary of the Federation was to appear before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Emigration and Immigration. On the 6th and 13th July, 1888, he gave evidence on, *inter alia*, the provision for Jewish religious worship in East London and other districts. Upon a computation made on this basis, the Secretary put in evidence that the number of Jews then resident in the East End was 33,000. The late Dr. Asher subsequently found that by taking the death rate and other tests, this figure was approximately correct. It may be of some interest to make a statistical comparison after a lapse of nearly a quarter of a century.

During the first year of its existence—in July, 1888—it was already felt that the Federation required the services of a Dayan or Minister, and provision was made for this contingency. At the same meeting it was determined that steps be forthwith taken to obtain representation on the Board of Guardians, and on

the Board of Shechita, and negotiations were at once entered into with the United Synagogue, with the object of reducing the cost of funerals. Four additional Synagogues and Chevras were admitted at this meeting. The next gathering, called for February 21st, 1888, is noteworthy for the letter which Lord Rothschild, in his enforced absence, addressed to the meeting. Referring to the proceedings at the previous meeting, Lord Rothschild wrote :—

> "It was understood and I undertook on the part of the United Synagogue, that that body will in no way seek to interfere with the Federation except to advise it in such matters as affect Jews generally, and which may be to the advantage and credit of the whole community. I have now to inform you that the Executive of the United Synagogue, before whom the matter has come, is most favourably disposed towards the Federation ; with regard to the Board of Shechita, which is composed of representatives of the Portuguese and United Synagogues, that Board must in the first instance, and in order to make the admission of the Federation legal, submit the question to, and seek the sanction of these bodies. The Executive Committee of the United Synagogue has referred to a sub-committee to consider and report on the best means to give effect to the desire of the Federation with regard

to cheap funerals, and generally how the condition of those composing the Federation may be improved."

How far the first portion of the foregoing letter may be regarded as having been justified by subsequent communal history, will depend, perhaps, on the personal view of the reader. The "friendly disposition" on the Shechita Board question was well dissembled, for there is no doubt that the United Synagogue obstructed the Federation from representation at, and a share in the profits of, the Shechita Board so long as it could; and although the cost of adult funerals was lowered, the application for a reduction of the cost of funerals for children was finally refused.

In the following month the United Synagogue propounded a scheme for assuring the lives of the members of the Federation of Synagogues in the Prudential Assurance Company for amounts sufficient to cover the cost of funerals at death, but eventually this plan was rendered unnecessary by the more liberal provisions of the Burial Society founded by the Federation in October, 1889.

Recommendations were circulated about this time among all the federated synagogues to register under the Public Worship Act, and in June, 1888, a motion was passed calling attention to "the desirability of a Jewish Dispensary." Attention was also

paid to the construction of the small synagogues then in the Federation, and already the Board was asked, with reference to one of its constituents, to "use its influence to have defects in the means of ingress and egress remedied"—works which were forthwith carried out.

The first reference to finance on the Minutes is in a letter, dated July, 1888, from Mr. Samuel Montagu, M.P., stating that "owing to unforeseen delay, the Federation could not obtain representation at the Board of Shechita, nor receive any share of the surplus during the current half-year, and enclosing a cheque for £64." This contribution was continued from the same source until the Federation "came to its own," and received the first remittance of its share of the Shechita Board profits in 1901.

Mr. Montagu provided further funds by allocating to the Federation for ten years, a rent of £50 a year, due to him from the Spital Square Synagogue. The financial statement for the first year shewed a modest expenditure of only £52 7s. 0d. for all purposes, and at the end of the first twelve months, in accordance with the Bye-laws, elections for a new Board for the ensuing two years were ordered.

One curious item in finance was the receipt in 1890 of a contribution of £39 1s. 0d., collected by Dr. Hildesheimer in Berlin, for the purposes of the Federation; another was a collection made in the

same year to mitigate the losses of the depositors with a firm of Motza Bakers which had failed; £102 10s. 6d. was distributed, of which £51 was received from the public.

The first business at the first meeting of the new Board was to pass a vote of condolence to the family of the late Dr. Asher "whose loss was shared by all sections of the community." Mr. Samuel Montagu, M.P., was elected Acting-President, and it was resolved that "the President for the time being of the United Synagogue shall be Hon. President of the Federation of Synagogues and be invited to attend all meetings of the Board."

The Ministers of the Federation.

The election of a Minister early engaged the attention of the Board and was brought within the range of practicability by the following letter from the Acting President, dated November 6th, 1889:—

> "My experience gained during the recent strike convinces me that the influence of a few Atheists over Jewish Working Men can no longer be ignored. I therefore appeal with confidence to the Federation of Synagogues, comprising so large a number of observant Jews, to take the lead in combating this most serious evil. I propose that the Federation should promptly engage a gentleman well acquainted with Jüdisch

Deutsch and able to lecture in English as a Maggid, or Minister (not Dayan), Salary, £300 per annum—no perquisites or other gains to be permitted."

"Qualifications:—To be a Talmudical Scholar, well versed in Jewish Laws, orthodoxy to be vouched for by our Ecclesiastical Authorities; in religious matters he must be under the jurisdiction of Dr. Adler."

Advertisements inviting applications were inserted in Jewish Journals in England, on the Continent and in America. It is of interest to-day to note that among the applicants there appears the name of the Rev. M. Hyamson, and of several other gentlemen who subsequently achieved European reputations. The candidates were reduced to four in number, and on January 30th, 1890, Dr. M. Lerner, then of Wurzheim, Elsass, was elected. He retained his connection with the Federation until his election in 1894 to the Chief Rabbinate of Altona and Schleswig-Holstein, when he was released by the Federation from his appointment.

In 1892 the names of applicants for the office of Maggid, which it had been determined to institute, were submitted to the Board, which, having selected two candidates, the Revs. J. Kohn-Zedek and Ch. Z. Maccoby, invited all the synagogues represented at the Federation to instruct their delegates to choose

between them. The results, however, showed that at the time there was no general desire for a Maggid's services. However in 1894, on the release of Dr. Lerner from his engagement as Minister, the matter was again brought forward and the Rev. Ch. Z. Maccoby was elected Maggid, which office he has retained with unmixed advantage to the large body of members of the Federation of Synagogues who can be reached through his ministrations.

In February, 1895, steps were taken to make an appointment to the office vacated by Dr. Lerner. A few months later the community was shocked by the news of the terribly sudden death of Dr. M. Grünwald, Chief Rabbi of Bulgaria, whilst on a visit to London in connection with the vacancy. The question remained in abeyance for some years until in July, 1901, attention was again drawn to the pressing necessity for the election of a successor to Dr. Lerner, the former Minister of the Federation. An invitation was, accordingly, extended to the Rev. Avigdor Chaikin, then at Sheffield, whose inaugural address was delivered in December in the New Synagogue, Great St. Helens. It was at the time hoped that the "happy thought" of the Federation's Minister delivering his first address in a constituent Synagogue of the United Synagogue would be of good augury for the future. The services of the Rev. A. Chaikin have been freely placed by the Board

at the disposal of all classes, and they have been appreciated at their merited high value. The Rev. A. Chaikin having, in 1911, been invited to rejoin the Beth-Din, the Board gladly gave its consent, subject to his being elected, and receiving emolument (in addition to his salary as a Minister of the Federation), as one of the Dayonim, which conditions were subsequently ratified by the Council of the United Synagogue.

The first reference to the post of a Chief Minister appears on July 26th, 1907, in the following letter from Lord Swaythling—the first after his elevation to the peerage :—

> " In commemoration of the honour conferred upon me, it is my intention to select a Chief Minister of the Federation. He must have a great reputation for orthodoxy, must be a doctor of theology and a good orator, also a gentleman of refined manners, about forty years of age, and able to take a prominent position among Jewish clerics. He will co-operate in all orthodox movements acceptable to our Board. Should he resign or otherwise be prevented from continuing in office, another may be appointed by me, and after me by my eldest son, the Honble. Louis Samuel Montagu, and after him by the trustees of this trust. If such a gentleman be found, who has my approval, I am prepared to

place five thousand pounds in the hands of four trustees, to enable them to pay his salary during ten years. These are the principal points. Of course a proper scheme will be prepared."

In May, 1909, after his first severe illness, Lord Swaythling announced that there were many applications, that the "difficulty was one of selection" and that he hoped to make a definite recommendation to the post "within a few months." He was not destined to make this announcement himself. His serious illness and subsequent death upset the plans he had in view and the selection had perforce to be deferred. Eventually a deputation, consisting of Messrs. H. Landau, M. Moses, J.P., and J. E. Blank, visited the Continent and on their return three distinguished Rabbis were invited to London, and were privately interviewed by a number of the most learned Jews in the Metropolis. Shortly afterwards a call was extended to Dr. Maier Jung, of Ung. Brod., Hungary, who was inducted into office at a special service held at the Philpot Street Synagogue on June 16th, 1912.

The Federation and the Shechita Board.

In 1889 a deputation waited on the Executive Committee of the United Synagogue with reference to the proposed relations between the Federation and the Shechita Board and there appears on the

Minutes reference to thanks due to the representatives of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogues "who have so cordially and generously recognised the claims of the Federation." The Shechita Board appointed a Special Committee to report upon the application, and this Committee reported in favour of the Federation both as to representation on the Board and participation in the profits arising from the sale of Kosher meat. Whilst the Portuguese Congregation gave its prompt and cordial support to the claims of the Federation, the United Synagogue did not treat them in the same liberal spirit. Protracted negotiations were carried on, and subsequently the United Synagogue refused altogether to admit, and succeeded in obstructing, the moderate demands of the Federation.

On February 12th, 1899, it was reported that the Shechita Board had on the 26th January resolved that Rule 2 be amended so that "the number of members constituting the Board be increased, with the view of adding representatives from such other metropolitan congregations under the religious control of the recognised Ecclesiastical Authorities as may desire to be represented." It was under this resolution that the Federation was for the first time represented on the Shechita Board. In February, 1901, after patiently waiting for twelve years, the Federation received from the Shechita Board its first

cheque, representing a quota of the profits distributed by the Board, and thanks are recorded on the Minutes to Mr. Joshua M. Levy and his colleagues for his, and their, services.

Extension of the Federation.

In 1889 the Federation appears to have "widened its stakes and extended its borders," for early in that year representatives from the New Dalston Synagogue—now the Stoke Newington Synagogue of the United Synagogue—as well as from the Finsbury Park Synagogue, were welcomed. Despite the provisions of the "Associate Synagogues Scheme" of the United Synagogue, the process of extension continued apace, and delegates were from time to time added from Notting Hill, Dalston, Stoke Newington, South Hackney, Limehouse, Canning Town, Bow, Tottenham, Walthamstow, Woolwich and Plumstead and now attend the Board's meetings. There are, at present, fifty-one Synagogues, with upwards of 6,000 members, represented at the Federation.

The Beth Hamedrash, etc.

In 1889 the Federation submitted to the United Synagogue the need for an additional Dayan and for an extension in the hours of the opening of the Beth Hamedrash—which latter was promptly arranged—

and also applied for representation on the Flour Committee. As the next reference to the Flour Committee does not appear on the Minutes until 1901—over a dozen years afterwards—it is evident that the original overtures received little encouragement.

Appointment of Elders.

Early in 1889 power was taken under a new Bye-law to appoint seven Elders—"not necessarily members of the Federation." It was then already hoped to provide in this way for the mutual exchange of representation between the United Synagogue and the Federation, but although there are gentlemen who attend both bodies, the official exchange has not come within the range of communal politics.

The Federation and the Jewish Board of Guardians, Medical Needs of the Jewish Poor, etc.

The Jewish Board of Guardians from the outset readily agreed to the proposal that the Federation should be directly represented upon that body, and in 1888 was the first communal institution to welcome a delegate from the Federation on its Administrative Board.

In 1889, "owing to the severity and length of the

Winter," collections were made in aid of the Jewish Board of Guardians, and have been continued, with few intermissions, annually since. It is of interest to note that of the sixteen Synagogues which contributed to this collection in 1889 only four now remain unamalgamated, or under their original titles.

Frequent references to the Jewish Board of Guardians appear in the proceedings of the Federation, and one of much interest is contained in the following extract from a Report ordered to be entered on the Minutes:—

> "On April 7th, 1891, a communication was addressed by the Federation to the Jewish Board of Guardians, suggesting the re-establishment of its medical department, and on the 13th of the same month, the whole subject of 'Medical Relief to the Jewish Poor' was referred by the Board of Guardians to its Executive Committee, who, after a full enquiry, submitted an interesting and exhaustive report. This report embraced the evidence of witnesses upon 'Parish Relief,' the effect of the 'Missionaries' Dispensaries,' and of 'Provident Dispensaries,' upon the relation of 'Language' as a means of communication between the foreign Jews and those to whom they applied for medical advice, the 'Proposed resuscitations and recommendations,' among which were 'That the medical department of

the Board be not re-established, and that it is desirable to provide efficient voluntary nurses, who should have received a thorough hospital training, and who should be competent to converse with the foreign, at least in German, but preferably also in the jargon which they speak."

"The Sick Nursing Enquiry" promptly followed, and the result of this enquiry, following the application of the Federation, was the establishment of the sick nursing system, one of the greatest boons ever conferred on the sick Jewish poor, and which has recently made such remarkable developments. A resolution was passed by the Federation, "whilst regretting that the Medical Department was not to be re-established," thanked the Board of Guardians for their courtesy. In 1889 the medical necessities of the Jewish poor again engaged attention and a resolution was passed:—

"That the attention of the Committee of the Jewish Provident Dispensary be called to the continued attendance of the foreign Jewish poor at the different missions and infirmaries for the purpose of obtaining gratuitous medical relief, and asking them to make such arrangements as will enable the very necessitous to obtain free medical aid and so avoid these poor people being compelled to have recourse to the Mission Houses for this aid."

Again in 1904 the same subject came before the Board and it was resolved :—

> "That the establishment of a Jewish Free Dispensary is an urgent necessity in East London in order to counterbalance the bait of free medicine, supplied by Missionary agencies in the vicinity."

The Federation also entered into correspondence with the German Hospital with a view to securing the extension of the number of days on which the Eastern Dispensary was opened, but the German Hospital expressed regret that its funds would not permit of the proposed extension.

The Federation Burial Society and Chevra Kadisha.

The first effective steps toward the establishment of the Federation Burial Society were taken in June, 1889, when two acres of land were acquired by Mr. Samuel Montagu, M.P., from the Western Synagogue for the purposes of a cemetery. A Committee was elected to draw up a scheme and a Society was established under the title of The Burial Society of the Federation of Synagogues. The laws and bye-laws were adopted at a meeting of the Board of the Federation in February, 1890, and these have since formed the basis of the government, not alone of the Federation Burial Society, but

likewise of the burial societies associated with constituent synagogues of the United Synagogue which have been established more or less upon the same model. A sub-committee was appointed to consider the establishment of a Chevra Kadisha and in October, 1890, such a society was formally established; rules were approved, and subsequently in 1897 a book of bye-laws as well as of *Dinim*, etc., (ספר קיצור מעבר יבק) were issued by the Society. The Federation Chevra Kadisha continues unostentatiously to carry on its labour of love—a true *Gemiluth Chesed*. Its work is much appreciated and reverently regarded by the members of the Federated Synagogues. Every *Kislev* a יום הכניסה is held, with special Services of Propitiatory Prayers (*Selichoth*), and many of the members observe the day as a Minor Fast.

The Burial Society of the Federation is cordially co-operating in the movement recently initiated by the sister Chevra Kadisha of the United Synagogue, for extending the sphere of the Chevras Kadisha, and has unanimously passed the following resolution:

> "Having regard to the important religious principles involved, and strongly desiring to assist as far as possible in the duty of providing watchers for the dying of our faith in hospitals and infirmaries, the Burial Committee agrees to place the sum of twenty pounds for one year

at the disposal of the joint Sub-Committee, to be paid when, and as soon as, the scheme is ready to be put into operation."

It is proposed to make a start with seven Hospitals and Infirmaries. The joint Sub-Committee is at present engaged in the preparation of the details of the scheme, which it is hoped will come into operation early in 1913.

In 1891 there were already as many as 600 members of the Burial Society, and in 1892 the subscription was raised to twopence per family per week, providing under certain regulations an additional benefit of one pound to members sitting Shiva. The Society during its earliest years was not self-supporting for on July 15th, 1891, a grant of fifty pounds was voted by the Federation to the funds of the Burial Society. By 1893 the Society was, however, financially sound. In that year £166 was paid in subscriptions, and payments for funerals amounted to £52 15s. 6d. The total income for the year amounted to £239 and the expenditure to £255. The balance brought forward at the commencement of that year more than compensated for the difference.

In 1897 Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart., M.P., made a gift of a further three acres of ground to the Society. In a report made on May 24th, 1899, the

Burial Committee complained that "at extremely short notice the Sandys Row Synagogue left the Society, having made an arrangement with the United Synagogue for burials." The Committee "all the more regret this occurrence as the Burial Society has frequently gone out of its way in order to avoid even the appearance of competition with the Burial Society of the United Synagogue. The Board regrets that the United Synagogue saw fit to grant lower terms (without any notice to the Board), to one of the Federation synagogues, whose members constituted a larger quota of subscribers to the Burial Society than any other, and whose general relations with the Federation were, and are, of the most cordial character." . . . "Steps are also under consideration for further protecting the Society against unfair competition."

In 1908, the Federation Burial Society acquired by purchase the cemetery of the defunct Maiden Lane Congregation. Previously isolated and disused, the cemetery had so deteriorated that its boundary walls either had fallen or were broken in. Many of the memorials were damaged, and the *Beth Chaim* had become derelict. Attention was drawn to the subject on several occasions in the Jewish Press. The Maiden Lane cemetery was promptly incorporated into the Federation ground, which was consecrated on July 17, 1910, and is now enclosed within

the new walls. As many as possible of the damaged memorials have been restored and re-erected.

Early in 1911, the Federation Burial Society entered into a new agreement for a term of years with the Western Synagogue for the continued utilisation of their buildings and employment of their officials at their cemetery at Edmonton, and for a right of way over their ground. This agreement avoids the duplication of buildings and officials for adjoining cemeteries, and is not only advantageous financially, but avoids communal overlapping. Sir Stuart Samuel, Bart., M.P., the President of the Western Synagogue, freely placed his services at the disposal of the Federation Burial Society during the protracted negotiations.

Attention may here be called to the phenomenal success of the Federation Burial Society, which after acquiring still further land, and expending £1,500 for walling in and laying out the new cemetery, possesses a present cash reserve of over £4,000. There are now 4,960 members of the Society in over 50 synagogues, the twopence subscription amounting in 1911-12 to the sum of £1,700, and paid funerals to £1,550. The present Treasurers of the Society are Messrs. Jacob Myer Libgott and Mark Moses, J.P. In 1910-11 the Burial Society contributed £100 to the finances of the Federation and repeated the donation in 1911-12.

The Federation and the Chedorim.

Considerable attention was devoted in 1900 by the Federation to the *Chedorim*, of which there were then almost 200 in existence, teaching some 2,000 boys between the ages of five and fourteen. A strong committee was appointed and serious efforts were made—not without some success—to secure reform from within, in so far as the closing of the smaller teaching rooms was involved. The insufficiency of the time devoted to Jewish religious teaching in the schools was already a grievance among the Jewish working classes who had recourse to the *Melammed* and his *Cheder* to make good the deficiency. The report was a document containing suggestions of much value, and that some of them are not without significance, even at this distance of time, will be evident from the following short extract:—

> "It is also necessary that the good offices and influence of the Jewish and other members of the School Board should be enlisted in favour of getting more of our faith appointed as masters and pupil teachers in those schools where the Jewish pupils are in a large majority. The great self-denial displayed by our working classes in obtaining religious as well as secular education for their children shews how earnest they are, and how they merit our warmest sympathy and consideration.

"The religious training of the children, who are to form the next generation of the Jews here, is surely a matter of highest importance to Judaism, and it is in the interest of the community, of the rising generation, and of the best and highest religious sentiments, that this should be recognised, stimulated and well directed; the very poorest may not always relish patronage, but help is ever welcome. The good wishes and interest of the parents should be maintained by a small fee being charged whenever possible for the extra education, and by getting them to elect a few of their number to visit the classes.

"The Jewish Association for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge is doing much, by means of the Sabbath and other classes, with the small staff and means at its disposal, but the matter is too large, too important, and too vital for any society, and requires the attention of the community and its appointed leaders."

Arising out of the report it was decided to memorialise the Jews' Free School; the following extracts from the address and the reply thereto are not without interest to-day. Had the proposal for continuation classes received a less frigid reception, the religious conditions of the present generation might have been less depressing.

"We respectfully suggest that a few modifica-

tions in the present arrangements would greatly benefit the children, and we are confident would also enhance the value of your Institution. We would ask you to direct that the hour of religious instruction be changed from the first to the last hour in the morning, when all the children would be assembled, this change, as you know, being in accordance with the Education Act, and working with great advantage at other Jewish schools.

"We recognise the great difficulty in altering the present mode of classification during the ordinary hours of study, but venture to think that on Sunday mornings the children might be arranged in classes corresponding to their knowledge of Hebrew.

"We would ask that facilities be given for preparing the children for their Barmitzvah, and for the formation of continuation classes in Hebrew and Religion to meet in the evenings, to which our children would be admitted on payment of a small fee."

The reply stated:—

"After giving careful attention to your suggestion, that the amount of Hebrew and religious instruction be increased, we beg to state that the nine hours which are devoted in each week to the purpose are deemed sufficient, especially

when the excessive demands upon the time of the children in connection with the curriculum imposed by the Government are taken into consideration, which render it impossible for the managers to alter the present mode of classification during the ordinary school hours. I would draw your attention to the fact that the managers have for many years done their best to afford facilities for preparing the children for their Barmitzvah.

"The formation of continuation classes in Hebrew and Religion to meet in the evenings, however desirable, does not, in the opinion of the managers, come within the scope of their heavy and responsible duties."

The continuous attention which the Board of the Federation bestowed on these questions did much to encourage the establishment of the various Talmud Torahs in the East End and eventually of the Talmud Torah Trust referred to later.

English Evening Classes for Foreigners.

Another educational movement which at about the same time received the strong support of the Federation was the effort for promoting a knowledge of English among our foreign brethren, and the report of 1890 mentions:—

"The Federation has also used its best en-

deavours in furthering the efforts of the Russo-Jewish Committee to establish English classes for foreign Jews, which are now on a firm footing. Classes have been established, one of them being held at a federated synagogue, and the thanks of the Russo-Jewish Committee have been tendered to the Federation."

The East End Scheme.

The "East End Scheme" makes its appearance for the first time on January 15th, 1890, with a letter addressed to the Jewish press signed by the Acting-President, and the whole forces of the Federation were ranged against the proposed "Colossal Synagogue in Whitechapel." Little over two years after the establishment of the Federation, the safety—nay the very existence—of the whole edifice was threatened by the suggested construction of a place of worship which should completely overshadow any of the modest synagogues then comprised in the Federation, despite the written assurance of Lord Rothschild, less than two years previously, that the United Synagogue would "in no way seek to interfere with the Federation." The agitation, for and against the new movement, continued for years and excited considerable unrest in the community. The shadow of the "Colossal Synagogue" threatened and hampered the Federation

continuously for over a decade. A public meeting against the proposal was held on May 6th, 1893, when the following resolutions were unanimously passed:—

> "That this meeting of Federated Synagogues respectfully begs the President, Honorary Officers and members of the Council of the United Synagogue not to permit a Colossal Synagogue to be established in Spitalfields, the very centre of the District in which the Federated Synagogues are situated.
>
> "That this meeting further points out that several of the Federated Synagogues have been rebuilt at great expense and at great sacrifice to the working classes of the district who have done this to render them in every respect worthy of the purpose for which they are intended. There is still a debt of several thousands of pounds upon these buildings and the result of the establishment of a Colossal Synagogue will be to reduce their incomes so seriously as to cripple any further attempts on their part for self-improvement."

Happily, the "Colossal Synagogue" never passed the embryo stage. On the occasion of the opening of the new Beth Hamedrash in Mulberry Street, Lord Rothschild very generously acknowledged that he was in error in supporting the "Colossal Synagogue"

movement and expressed his pleasure that this portion of the East End Scheme had remained unfulfilled.

In 1893 the Acting-President of the Federation reported "that a plot of land had been secured in Mile End Road near Charrington's Hall; two-thirds of the purchase money being paid by Lord Rothschild, the other third by himself, and that a Hall would probably be erected upon it." He invited the meeting to suggest the best means for utilising the land. It was thereupon resolved:—

> "That this meeting hails with pleasure the proposition for building a Rothschild's Hall for the moral, physical and mental improvement of the Jews of East London; that this scheme, which might also include a local synagogue, would be of marked advantage, not alone to the residents in the district, but eventually to the community at large."

It may be of interest to mention that what was probably the first detailed East End Scheme, was propounded by the present writer, who, at the suggestion of the Acting President of the Federation, prepared a scheme. Under date of June 23, 1893, Mr. Blank submitted a "rough sketch" for a Rothschild Hall, "so arranged as to be of the greatest utility to the persons for whom such an establishment would be intended, and productive of the best results to the

community" . . . The plan, which was forwarded by Mr. Samuel Montagu, M.P., to Lord Rothschild, was drawn up under the following heads: Site, Buildings, Scope, Ladies' Room (for Visitors among the East End poor) Social Gatherings, Hebrew Reading Room and Library, Lecture Hall, Synagogue, Branch of the Board of Guardians, Labour Exchange and Bureau, Aids to Thrift, Evening Classes for Foreigners, Entertainments, Open Space, Residence ("Settlement" on Toynbee Hall lines), and "Young Israel" ("means in connection with the Rothschild Hall for banding together the young lads and girls lately left or leaving the Free School, Stepney School, and other Jewish Educational Centres"). On the 14th April, 1897, the United Synagogue appointed a Committee (of which Mr. H. Landau was a member) on the East End Scheme, and the Report published in 1898, contains several pages of evidence given before the Sub-Committee by the Secretary of the Federation.

There does not appear to be any record of what became of the Mile End Road plot of land which apparently was not utilised for communal purposes.

Survey of the Federated Synagogues.

In 1890 it was determined that every federated synagogue should be brought up to a reasonable standard, so far as sanitation and safety are concerned,

and Mr. Lewis Solomon, F.R.I.B.A., the Hon. Architect, in the honorary discharge of his office, surveyed and reported fully upon every one of the synagogues with the result that important alterations were promptly effected.

Chief Rabbi's Fund.—Election of Dr. Adler.

The first mention of the Chief Rabbi's Fund on the Minutes of the Federation appears under date of March 2nd, 1890, when £10 was voted, and to the Rabbinate under date of May 19th, 1890, when the Federation was invited to appoint eight delegates to the Conference "to consider, in connection with the Honorary Officers of the United Synagogue, the proposals contained in the letters addressed to the President in reference to the appointment of a Chief Rabbi." It is of interest to contrast this invitation to the Federation, at the time when it represented little over one thousand members and contributed but £10 to the Chief Rabbi's Fund, to send eight delegates to the Conference, with the recent invitation (to which further reference is made at a later stage of this review) to send three (one was originally suggested) when the membership of the Federation of Synagogues had increased by five times and its direct contributions to the Chief Rabbi's Fund by something like fourteen times. The "£5 franchise" was decided upon in 1890, despite the objections then raised by the

Federation delegates. It was, however, felt that as Dr. Adler, the delegate Chief Rabbi, was definitively approved for the higher appointment by a general consensus of public opinion, a "protest against the £5 franchise" fully met the exigencies of the occasion.

The first business of the Board after the election of Dr. Adler was to pass a resolution tendering him cordial congratulations and best wishes, and expressing the hope that his election would "lead to harmony and unity between all sections of the community."

Opening of the New Road Synagogue.

An exception is made in particularly recording the opening of the New Road Synagogue, owing to the special circumstances connected with the occasion. The new building was of unique interest in so far as it was one of the first of the "model" synagogues to be erected as a result of the amalgamation of a number of small Chevras. The synagogue was consecrated and opened on Tuesday, May 24th, 1892, the seventy-third birthday of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria. The occasion was seized by the members to manifest their gratitude and loyalty, and the neighbourhood was *en fête*. The National Anthem was sung in Hebrew, and also printed in the Order of Service, a specially bound copy of which was prepared on satin, and forwarded to Her Majesty. An acknowledgment of the gift was received from Buck-

ingham Palace, by Mr. J. E. Blank, the Honorary Secretary to the Building Committee. Lord Rothschild laid a Memorial Stone on the occasion, and Mr. Leopold de Rothschild was also present. The New Road Synagogue possesses not only one of the *Sephorim* used at the services formerly held at New Court, but likewise the very valuable doors of the Ark in the original synagogue at New Court. These gifts were presented to the New Road Synagogue by Messrs. Rothschild on the occasion of the opening.

The Shechita Board and the Machzike Hadath.

During the early nineties the communal peace was severely shaken by the establishment, under the auspices of the Machzike Hadath, of a rival Shechita Board appointing its own Shochetim, who refused to recognise the metropolitan Ecclesiastical Authorities. There were rival slaughter houses, poultry yards, and butcher shops, and the heavy financial loss to institutions was perhaps less serious than the loss of *morale* in the community caused by the "atmosphere" of disloyalty, of resistance to, and disregard of established authority. This unfortunate state of affairs lasted several years, with increasing exacerbation, and was finally ended by an agreement entered into on the 16th February, 1905, between the Machzike Hadath

of the one part, and the Federation of Synagogues on the other, the first clause of which ran: The Spitalfields Great Synagogue forming part of the Machzike Hadath shall join the Federation and the Burial Society of such Federation upon the same terms in all respects as the other constituent synagogues of the Federation."

The biennial report stated: "This amalgamation will materially affect future communal history in many and varied aspects. In this important question the Federation of Synagogues again stands for communal solidarity. Whilst carefully avoiding recriminative details, the Federation may claim that throughout the unhappy secession it has ever been ready to provide the golden bridge making for reunion and concord. The schism is at end, and the Federation 'created to avoid a threatened split' is once again 'the medium for the removal of communal dissension and for dispelling disagreement and misunderstanding.'"

Lord Rothschild joined Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart., in providing the large sum of £1560 required at the time to liquidate the pressing liabilities of the Machzike Hadath.

Jewish Religious Education Board.

The project for the establishment of the Jewish Religious Education Board in June, 1894, received

the unanimous approval of the Board, and it was decided that "when it was accepted by the other metropolitan Jewish organisations the Federation will support it to the best of its ability." For ten years the relations of the Federation with the Jewish Religious Education Board were of the most cordial character. In February, 1905, commenced the regrettable difference with the Education Board, when a resolution was passed :—

> "That the Federation being an orthodox body cannot contribute towards a Jewish Education Board who have elected for one of their leaders a gentleman who has openly denied the Fundamental Principles of Judaism."

The Federation felt and expressed itself strongly on the matter and withdrew from the Board. Unhappily for communal solidarity the rift widened and was not again closed until 1911, when, on the election of a new President of the Jewish Religious Educational Board, that Board addressed a letter to the Federation inviting it again to co-operate with, and be represented at, the Board, when it was unanimously resolved that the invitation be cordially accepted. The next report of the Federation referring to the subject adds:—"The Board of the Federation of Synagogues looks with hope and confidence to the new President of the Jewish Religious Education Board, that he will rise to the possibilities

of the office he has accepted, and be encouraged and strengthened in the knowledge of the great and permanent results which will follow firm, consistent, and unimpaired teaching in the classes under his direction of the Jewish Religion as handed down by our forefathers, and the training of the rising generation of Jews in this country to live with, and for, their religion, as willingly and courageously as our brethren in other and less favoured lands are ready to lay down their lives for the glorification of, and as witnesses to, its eternal truths."

Jews in Infirmaries.

In October, 1904, correspondence with the United Synagogue and with the St. George's Infirmary, and between the Secretary of the Federation and the Jewish Board of Guardians passed, with regard to the treatment of Jews at the St. George's Infirmary. It was only five years later, in 1909, that the St. George's Guardians finally announced their intention of supplying Kosher food to such inmates of the Infirmary as asked for it, and this was extended in 1910 to the Mile End Infirmary. Attention was at about the same period drawn to the report, which then appeared, that eleven Jewish children, inmates of St. George's Workhouse, had been transferred to the workhouse school at Plashet, and were being brought up under non-Jewish influences. From subsequent correspon-

dence it transpired that some of the children were clearly illegitimate. A further letter, received in July, 1905, from the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue, promised that this body "will not lose sight of the matter." A similar complaint came before the Board in 1908, relating to "seven Jewish children in a Christian home in Mile End Road." Letters were addressed to the United Synagogue "urging the importance of information being systematically collected relative to Jewish children in 'scattered homes,' and of proper provision being made for the religious education of poor Jewish waifs and strays, who should be adequately supervised throughout the various poor-law districts of the metropolis, and urging that care should be taken that these children should not be deprived of their religious education as Jews." Whilst referring to these children the report continued "it may not be amiss to sound a note of warning relative to the case of children falling into the capacious and ever open maws of the missionaries. Whatever opinion may be formed as to the desirability of taking steps with regard to adults, the case of the children, who are not free agents, is on quite another plane. They are robbed—without their consent, and frequently without their knowledge—of their religious birthright, and the Board regards with apprehension the *laissez-faire* attitude of the community towards these

children. In times past a hard fight would have been waged to save even one of them: now numbers—said to run into hundreds—are allowed to drift out of their faith without any public authority actively espousing their cause."

Jewish Children and the Conscience Clause.

It having been found in 1895 that at certain Board Schools Jewish children attended Christian religious instruction, handbills were extensively circulated drawing the attention of Jewish parents to the right afforded them under the Education Act of withdrawing their children from non-Jewish religious instruction. In February, 1901, the Secretary drew the attention of the Board to the practice in certain outlying Board Schools of evading the provisions of the Conscience Clause. The Jewish children though ostensibly not participating in the prayers and religious instruction were kept in the same rooms during their progress, and overheard them. Representations were forthwith made to the London School Board, the School Management Committee of which then asked "for the names of the schools referred to" as evading the Conscience Clause. The information asked for was readily supplied, and eventually a letter was received from the London School Board stating *inter alia* that the Board "have decided to request the Board's Inspector in each of

the cases mentioned to visit the school, and see that suitable arrangements are made to enable those children whose parents have claimed the benefit of the Conscience Clause to take advantage of it with the least possible inconvenience, and to report their action to the School Management Committee." Thus an effective protest of the highest value was made and the very immediate danger of influencing infantile and youthful minds in a non-Jewish direction was avoided.

Talmud Torah Trust.

In July, 1905, a full report upon the then existing Talmud Torahs, was presented to the Board, dealing with the curriculum, the question of overcrowding and overworking, finance, provision of Fire Drill, etc., which resulted in the establishment of the Talmud Torah Trust. This body has direct relation with, and supervises the work of, the Talmud Torahs, receiving grants from its funds. The Trust was founded by Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart., and is now under the Chairmanship of Mr. H. Landau.

Marriage Authorisation Fees.

In the light of recent events this question is of considerable interest. In October, 1897, the Board made representations to the United Synagogue with a view to "compounding the fees, by an enhanced

payment to the Chief Rabbi's Fund, or to obtaining a reduction in the charge for authorisations." Although no power exists in the Act of Parliament constituting the United Synagogue to impose such a charge, and although the authorisation is not required by the civil law, the Federation synagogues were anxious on the one hand that there should be no interruption in the issue of the authorisations, and on the other to contribute by the payment of a reasonable voluntary fee, mutually agreed upon, to the Chief Rabbi's Fund of the United Synagogue. After somewhat protracted negotiations, conditions were agreed to by which these desired ends were secured. In order not to compete with the cheap marriages at the East London Synagogue, the minimum marriage fee at a Federation synagogue was fixed at one guinea. In February, 1904, an application was received from the Notting Hill Synagogue, representing a working-class district which could not avail itself of the cheap weddings at the East London Synagogue, suggesting a reduction in their synagogue of the minimum fee for the celebration of marriage to 10/-. A letter in this sense was forwarded to the United Synagogue but the proposal was rejected.

Fire Insurance.

Strong representations having been made in various quarters to the Federation of the great

hardship suffered by a number of East London Jews whose policies (held in well-known offices many years without any claim having been made) were suddenly determined, and of the general difficulty of East London Jews to obtain fire insurance, Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart., M.P., in 1891, approached the Alliance Assurance Company on the subject. As a result this Company undertook to grant at a moderate premium policies from £100 to £2,000 within a given East London area in cases recommended by a Committee of Investigation, to be delegated by the Federation of Synagogues. This Committee was constituted with Mr. Stuart M. Samuel (now Sir Stuart M. Samuel, Bart., M.P.), as Chairman, and it is noteworthy that the advantages it affords are not limited to the members of the Federation synagogues, but are common to practically all the Jews residing in the given area. The work of the Committee is still in operation with marked benefit to East London Jewry.

Sabbath Observance Movement.

In 1900 a Committee having been appointed for the purpose of improving Sabbath Observance, the Board determined to assist in this object, and voted a grant towards the preliminary expenses. A pastoral by the Chief Rabbi, and a letter to employers jointly signed by the Chief Rabbi and by the Acting

President of the Federation were widely circulated. A great public meeting was held at the Jewish Working Men's Club, at which resolutions were carried, (*a*) "deploring the widespread desecration of the Sabbath and the evil such desecration inflicts from a religious, moral, and physical standpoint;" (*b*) "pledging the meeting to further abstention from Sabbath labour"; and (*c*) "accepting an offer made by Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart., M.P., to contribute an equal sum (not exceeding £1000) to that subscribed by the Jewish Trade Associations, etc., to support their members for a short period, while out of employment through being discharged on account of their observing the holy Sabbath" and inviting the co-operation of the Trade Societies. The Committee met on several occasions, and a Conference was held with delegates of Trade Societies, at which it was resolved to recommend the adoption of the resolutions passed at the public meeting to the Jewish branches of Trade Unions, but the fund was not subscribed. It is to be hoped that the efforts of the recently-established Sabbath Observance Society will meet with greater success.

The Flour Committee.

In July, 1901, the Board of the Federation again made application for representation on the Conjoint Flour Committee of the United Synagogue.

This was practically a renewal of the previous application made in February, 1889. The proposition was then strenuously opposed and rejected, but "other times, other manners," and in February, 1902, notification was received that the recommendation of the Executive Committee was adopted by the United Synagogue, viz.: "That the Federation of Synagogues be permitted to elect two representatives of their body on the Conjoint Flour Committee, and that henceforth the division of losses for the three bodies be as follows: six eighths proportion to the United Synagogue; one eighth proportion to the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue; one eighth proportion to the Federation of Synagogues; and the system of the distribution of Motzas to remain as at present, viz.:—to the Ashkenazi Jews by the Overseers Committee of the United Synagogue; and to the Sephardi Jews by the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation; and that in the event of the account for any one year showing a net profit, the same to be carried to the credit of the account of the Conjoint Flour Committee, to be devoted to the objects for which the said Conjoint Committee is constituted. The Federation has since regularly borne its share of the communal burden of providing Motzas for public institutions and for the very poor.

The Federation and the Provinces.

The Reading Hebrew Congregation had—in the early part of 1895—approached the Federation of Synagogues, but the time was not then ripe for favourable action. The Reading Hebrew Congregation, in its second communication (in 1901), applied for formal affiliation with the Federation of Synagogues. No provision had as yet been made for active co-operation with the Provinces, but arising out of the application from Reading, the Board of the Federation unanimously resolved "that the principle of affiliating orthodox provincial congregations is hereby approved, and that it be referred to the Executive Committee to prepare promptly a scheme for carrying this resolution into effect." In consequence of this resolution, in November, 1901, the Acting President of the Federation issued a circular letter to the provincial congregations, inviting affiliation and suggesting an annual conference, either in the metropolis or in the provinces.

In May, 1902, the first Conference of the representatives of the Jewish congregations of Great Britain and Ireland was held under the auspices of the Federation of Synagogues, when the following resolutions were passed:—

1. That this Conference of British Congregations is of opinion that it would be of benefit to

the Jews throughout the country if facilities were afforded them for a mutual interchange of ideas with a view to joint and concerted action in matters of common interest; and to this end the Conference would welcome the organisation, on a permanent basis, of a Jewish Congregational Union, to meet periodically in London and elsewhere.

2. That this Conference is of opinion that the disadvantages caused by the overcrowding of Jews in our large towns ought to be alleviated by a distribution from those centres to other places where work is obtainable under more salubrious surroundings, and that the Conference would appove the formation of a scheme for co-operation on the part of the represented congregations in order to accomplish this object.

That there existed in the provinces a strong desire for intercommunication with the metropolis was evidenced by the readiness with which the suggestion for a conference was responded to: 93 provincial delegates, representing 43 different congregations, attended the Conference, the proceedings at which were of an interesting and animated character. It was remarked in a communal organ at the time, "this Conference does make a beginning. That is its great merit, and whatever it may accomplish is all so much to the good. . . . It will be something to

have put an end to the inglorious isolation of our various communities in England, Scotland and Ireland, and to have instituted 'a common meeting ground,' where questions which are of importance to all of them may be discussed, and where the experience gained in one quarter may be put at the service of another.' "

In connection with the Conference, an official visit was paid by Messrs. M. Moses and J. E. Blank to Leeds; a letter was subsequently received from the Leeds Hebrew Congregation stating that the visit had "awakened an enthusiasm which would lead to practical good." To meet Messrs. M. Moses and J. E. Blank, the four congregations held a conjoint meeting and it was subsequently decided "to call a meeting at an early date to decide upon the means which should be adopted in future for united action in all matters connected with general communal work."

The Dispersion Committee, which was promptly organised as a result of the second resolution passed at the Conference, arranged for a public meeting for the purpose of encouraging and stimulating removals from the congested areas to Tottenham, where arrangements were made by the committee for regular services and Religion Classes, and for the supply of Kosher meat. Help was also extended to Canning Town. A number of families were also assisted to remove to, and settle in, the provinces.

The organisation of the committee is still in existence, and calls are occasionally made on its services.

General Movements.—Board of Deputies.

Since 1889, the Federation of Synagogues has been continuously represented at the Board of Deputies, a delegate being elected at, and sitting for, the Spital Square Synagogue. One moiety of the quota contributed to the Board of Deputies is borne by the Federation.

Workshops Act, &c.

In June, 1893, the Board prepared and sent to the Home Office a Jüdisch translation of the Workshops Act, and made arrangements for the free issue of copies thereof, and in 1894, the subject of the importance of the promotion of Naturalization amongst the members of the Federation of Synagogues was dealt with.

Visitation Committee.

In 1897 the Board of the Federation co-operated for the first time with the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue.

Rothschild Recognition Fund.

When, in February, 1898, a movement was initiated for the collection of the cost of the new

wing of the Jews' Free School as a recognition of Lord Rothschild's truly invaluable services to the community, the idea was nowhere more eagerly seized upon than in East London. The biennial report stated "that the Federation collection represented sacrifices cheerfully made by those than whom none more truly venerate the name of Rothschild or more cordially appreciate the great and beneficent work carried out under the ægis of the Rothschilds at the Jews' Free School."

Preservation of the Eyes.

In May, 1901, circulars in Jüdisch and English, on the care and preservation of the sight, were issued by Gardner's Trust for the Blind, and the Federation synagogues were recommended to distribute these circulars.

Census.

In 1901 it was reported that the Federation had printed the Jüdisch circulars for the Census at the request of the Rev. B. Berliner, Hon. Secretary of the Visitation Committee. The Federation also co-operated in the Jewish organisation of subsequent Census enumerations of the people.

Mohelim.

In 1902, in accordance with the suggestion made by the late lamented Dr. Adler, the Federation

issued a circular to its constituents with reference to the training of Mohelim, and the most cordial relations have since subsisted between the Federation and the Initiation Society, whose lists are regularly circulated among the Federation synagogues.

Post-mortems at the London Hospital.

In 1908 the Federation was in correspondence with the London Hospital with reference to statements in the abstracts of the previous report of the Burial Society of the United Synagogue, suggesting that the relative proportion of post-mortems to Jewish deaths at the London Hospital was excessive, that in no case had a dissected part been returned for Jewish burial, and urging that steps be taken to ensure that the proper religious feeling of the relatives of the deceased should be respected. The reply gave the statement of the head of the Pathological Department, that since he had been in charge no organ or limb had been removed from a Jewish patient after a post-mortem, and that such examinations were performed "only at the express permission of friends and relatives." The Federation rejoined that the complaints with reference to the Jewish post-mortems at the London Hospital had been so persistent as to merit the attention of the Burial Societies of both the Federation and of the United Synagogue, as well as other bodies, resulting in an official interview between

representatives of the United Synagogue Burial Society and the hospital authorities, when it was agreed that any part dissected after a post-mortem should be returned for Jewish burial. Depite this agreement no such part had been returned, and if there had been no single case of such dissection then the question might arise *prima facie* whether there had been sufficient ground for the number of Jewish post-mortems. With regard to the statement that these were performed at all "only at the express permission of friends and relatives," it was pointed out that in every complaint which had reached the Federation it had been distinctly stated that the "permission" had been wrung by *force majeure* in the shape of a threat that non-compliance with the wish of the hospital authorities for a post-mortem would be met by reporting the case to the Coroner, when an inquest would be ordered as a matter of course. To limit the number of strange hands through which their dead would have to pass the family reluctantly consent to the post-mortem. It was further pointed out that until two or three years previously, watchers (officials of the Burial Society), were present at all Jewish post-mortems, and the Federation urged the re-introduction of this privilege.

Correspondence also passed between the United Synagogue and the Federation with reference to the

provisions of Watchers at post-mortems on Jewish deceased held at the London Hospital. As a result of an interview between Messrs. J. E. Blank and M. Moses with Mr. E. W. Morris, the Secretary of the London Hospital, it was arranged that the fullest facilities would henceforth be granted to the families or friends of Jewish deceased who desired to have Jewish watchers present at post-mortems, and that the times at which such were held would be notified to the families or friends. The Federation suggested to the United Synagogue the importance of a return to their former practice of having one of their official watchers present at every Jewish post-mortem, in order to ensure that all mortal remains are given up for interment.

Stepney Borough Mortuary.

The Secretary of the Federation had interviews with the Chairman of the Public Health Committee and with the Medical Officer of the Stepney Borough Council touching complaints which had been made that Jewish bodies awaiting inquest had remained unwatched and lay, although there was a small Jewish mortuary—the sexes mixed—in the common mortuary, side by side with non-Jews. As a result of these interviews arrangements were made that facilities should forthwith be granted for the strict carrying out of Jewish ritual in all cases of Jewish bodies, male

or female, lying at the mortuary; and that proper accommodation would be provided for watchers. The details were duly communicated to the Sexton of the Burial Society of the United Synagogue.

The Death of King Edward VII.

On the death of our late beloved Sovereign, King Edward VII. of pious memory, the following loyal Address was voted, and was subsequently acknowledged by the Home Secretary:

"That this meeting of the Board of the Federation of Synagogues, representing forty-nine metropolitan and suburban congregations, places on record its deep and abiding sense of the national calamity and of the irreparable loss sustained by all classes by the untimely death of their beloved and revered King, Edward VII. of blessed memory. The members of the Board in dutiful allegiance respectfully tender to King George and Queen Mary, to the Queen-Mother, and to all the members of the Royal Family the expression of their heartfelt condolence and profound sympathy, and pray that our Heavenly Father will bestow His divine consolation upon the Royal House in their grief and preserve the members thereof from all further sorrowing and suffering. The members further tender to His Most Gracious Majesty George V., King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions

beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, the expression of their dutiful allegiance and devotion and respectful congratulations on his Accession, and most sincerely wish him and Queen Mary a long and prosperous reign."

Seventieth Birthday of Lord Rothschild.

The Federation, in common with other communal organisations, took the opportunity of joining in the general congratulations bestowed on Lord Rothschild on his seventieth birthday. The Board unanimously passed the following resolution, and the late Lord Swaythling, who was accompanied by the Hon. Officers and the Secretary, in attending to make the presentation at New Court, assured Lord Rothschild of the respect, the regard, and the affection in which he is held throughout the Federation, and of the appreciation of the high honour his Lordship had conferred on their body by his continued acceptance of the office of Honorary President.

"The Board of the Federation of Synagogues tenders to the Rt. Hon. Lord Rothschild, P.C., G.C.V.O., the expression of its cordial congratulations and heartfelt good wishes on the occasion of his 70th birthday. The members recall with sentiments of appreciation the practical goodwill which Lord Rothschild evinced towards the Federation of

Synagogues at its foundation, by his prompt acceptance of the office of President, and subsequently of Honorary President, and regards with particular gratification his Lordship's continued official connection with their body for nearly a quarter of a century. By his generous contributions towards the erection of model synagogues of modest dimensions especially suited to the requirements of the working classes, by his intense personal interest in every movement having for its object the welfare of the less fortunate, and by his championship of the Jewish cause, wherever assailed, the members of the Federation of Synagogues have shared in the advantages conferred on the community by his Lordship's devotion to the public good. They desire to fervently join in the general prayer that Lord Rothschild may be destined to enjoy for many years unimpaired health and uninterrupted happiness."

The Late Acting-President.

The cordial congratulations of the Board were also passed to the late Acting-President on his being created a Baronet in 1894. In January, 1903, an album containing a congratulatory address signed by representatives of all the Federation synagogues was presented to Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart., on his seventieth birthday. His elevation to the peerage was also celebrated.

The last attendance at the Board was made by Lord Swaythling at the meeting held on November 8th, 1910, and his death took place on the 12th of January, 1911. י"ב טבת תרע"א לפ"ק.

The day of his interment was given over to general mourning in Jewish East London; his remains were followed to their last resting place literally by thousands of men, on many of whom this desire to pay a mark of final respect entailed no little sacrifice. Memorial Services were held in many of the Federation synagogues, and at a meeting of the Board, specially convened for the purpose, the following vote of condolence was unanimously passed to the members of the family:—

"That this meeting places on record the expression of its profound and abiding grief on the death of the Rt. Hon. Lord Swaythling, the founder of the Federation of Synagogues. The late Lord Swaythling was Acting-President almost throughout the existence of the Federation, and continued to hold the office until his lamented death.

"By the establishment of the Federation of Synagogues, Lord Swaythling created an organisation which, for the first time, gave the Jewish working-classes an effective and responsible voice in communal affairs. By his generous and continuous contributions towards the cost of the erection of model synagogues he raised the standard of

synagogal worship in East London and the suburbs generally.

"By his conduct of the affairs of the Federation of Synagogues, and of the proceedings at its meetings, he set up a standard to be followed in the local synagogues, and this has been of lasting beneficent influence in the continuous improvement in every social and religious organisation which came within the sphere of his influence. Always easy of approach, he readily placed his invaluable experience and unrivalled counsel at the disposal of all who sought his advice. Above all, by his steadfast adherence, at all stages of his great career, to orthodox Judaism, he deservedly enjoyed the abiding confidence, regard and affection, not alone of the thousands of Jews he directly and indirectly benefited, but of orthodox Jewry throughout the world.

"By his generous gifts of land at Edmonton he established and consolidated the Burial Society of the Federation, and by his decision that his mortal remains should rest side by side with those with, and for whom he worked in his lifetime, he set the coping stone of a great career, devoted to his fellowmen and to the consolidation of orthodox Judaism.

"His life's work will remain an abiding influence for good, not alone for this, but likewise for generations to come, an examplar of unselfish devotion to the communal weal.

"The members of the Board pray that divine consolation may be granted to all the members of the late Lord Swaythling's family, that they may be preserved from all sorrow, and that the knowledge that their grief is universally shared will mitigate their mourning for a loss irreparable to themselves and to Judaism at large."

A Memorial Fund was promptly initiated among the Federation synagogues, and the capital sum so collected was transferred to the Talmud Torah Trust, the interest to be devoted annually to Swaythling Memorial Prizes to one or more pupils of local Talmud Torahs or Yeshiboth.

As is common knowledge not alone the creation of the Federation was due to the foresight of the late Lord Swaythling but he likewise generously provided throughout its existence for the main portion of its financial requirements. His final conversation with the Secretary of the Federation—within a fortnight of his death—was to charge him with seeing that his wishes relative to the appointment of a Chief Minister were brought to a successful issue.

The New Acting-President and Treasurer.

Not the least important benefit conferred on the Federation by the late Lord Swaythling was the initiation of measures during his lifetime for the continuity of his wise administration. It was his

oft-expressed desire that on his death, or retirement, his mantle should fall on the shoulders of his eldest son. The Executive Committee unanimously invited the present Lord Swaythling to accept nomination for the office of Acting-President, and, in assenting, his Lordship expressed his sense of the sacred obligation he had undertaken in giving effect to the wishes of his father. In becoming Acting-President, Lord Swaythling vacated his office as one of the Treasurers, which he held for several years as the Hon. Louis S. Montagu. The Hon. Gerald S. Montagu was elected in his stead.

Legacies.

On May 25th, 1908, notification was received of a bequest by the late S. S. Oppenheim, of a Sepher Torah and Ark upon trust "to present the same to such Synagogue, or Jewish Charitable Institution, as the Board may in their uncontrolled discretion consider fit." The Ark was presented to the Philpot Street Synagogue and the Scroll was made "ritually good" and presented to the Limehouse Synagogue. The late S. S. Oppenheim also left a bequest "the annual income to be allotted to four widows and two orphans." It was agreed that the United Synagogue shall elect one orphan boy and two widows, and that the Federation shall elect one orphan boy and two widows.

Two thousand pounds was received under the will of the late Lord Swaythling, who, in addition, bequeathed to the Federation all the principal monies advanced to synagogues by, and repayable to, him personally.

Under the will of the late Harris Norman, the Federation benefitted to the extent of £4,417 14s. 6d. This was the famous "will in a hat" case in which one-half of the estate was left to the "London Synagogue for the Poor." There were many claimants to this designation, but most of the aspirants were soon eliminated, only the United Synagogue and the Federation being left as protagonists. It will, at this stage, no longer be an "indiscretion" to divulge that the Federation unofficially approached the United Synagogue with a suggestion for "honours divided," both sides to agree equally to share the moiety willed to the "London Synagogue for the Poor." The offer was rejected, with the result that the estate had to run the gauntlet of litigation, becoming visibly attenuated after each encounter. Eventually the Court adjudged the Federation to be the institution designated by the testator, and the foregoing sum of £4,417 14s. 6d. was received and invested.

Death of the Very Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler, ז"ל Chief Rabbi.

In July, 1911, the entire community suffered an almost irreparable bereavement by the death of the Chief Rabbi, and the Board of the Federation gave expression to its deep sense of personal mourning by passing the following resolution at a meeting specially called for the purpose:—

"That the Board of the Federation of Synagogues places on record the expression of its profound grief on the death of the Very Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler, Chief Rabbi, and of its deep sense of the loss which has befallen Anglo-Judaism.

"Since the establishment of the Federation of Synagogues nearly a quarter of a century ago, the members of the Federation of Synagogues have received the advantage of his ready co-operation in their efforts to raise the standard of synagogal buildings in East London. The late Dr. Adler consecrated the majority of the new synagogues erected under the auspices of the Federation, and on the occasion of these and other visits to the Federation synagogues, heartened and sustained the members by his deep-seated and earnest sympathy with their difficulties and by his practical suggestions for the amelioration of their lot.

"The members of the Board pray that Mrs. Adler and the members of her family will be sustained in their bereavement by the knowledge that their loss is intimately and universally shared. Not alone in the United Kingdom, but throughout the civilised world, the death of Dr. Adler is mourned as a loss to his community, to Judaism generally, and to the cause of public philanthropy at large."

The community is still seeking a successor to adequately fill the void created by the death of the Chief Rabbi, and in these critical times there is an additional obligation to be circumspect in recording passing events lest one add by a single word to the present difficulties. It appears to be more or less generally held in the community that there had been no prevision of the difficulties which would be raised by the situation, that not a note of warning had been sounded nor an effort made to render less acute the difficulties which would be created when the inevitable vacancy in the Chief Rabbinate had become an actuality.

Nevertheless, it must be recorded that such is not the case. In 1910, the Hon. Officers of the Federation and its Secretary attended a meeting at Lord Rothschild's office, where they were met by the Executive of the United Synagogue, and sought, among other questions, to come to some arrangement

upon the Rabbinate. The result was summed up in a letter from the Secretary of the United Synagogue to the late Lord Swaythling, which included the following passage :—

"The question of the Rabbinate appears to be that which presses mainly upon the representatives of the Federation. It is, in the opinion of the Hon. Officers, inexpedient to discuss that question at the present time. But, apart from that objection, they feel that it would not be possible to pledge the United Synagogue, or the community at large, to the proposal suggested, which is 'the mutual agreement for the election of a first Minister of the Federation to be Delegate Chief Rabbi and eventually Chief Rabbi.' The Anglo-Jewish community, as a whole, have to be considered in regard to this question."

The concluding sentence in the foregoing letter from the Secretary of the United Synagogue represents the stand which the Federation felt itself called upon to take on this vital question, when the appointment of a successor to the late Dr. Adler eventually came to be discussed. In November, 1911, when an invitation was received by the Federation to send a representative to the Conference, the Federation from the outset distinctly enunciated its attitude, and replied on November 23rd, that "if the Federation of Synagogues is to be properly represented on the body dealing with the election

of the Chief Rabbi, it must not be in proportion to its contribution to the Chief Rabbi's Fund (which was fixed with special reference to the circumstances under which the contribution is made), but to the immense interests it represents in the religious life of the community. It necessarily follows, then, that the elective influence must be in proper ratio to the membership, which numbers 6,500 in the 51 Synagogues represented." It was added, "that as the Conference would deal only with details connected with the election and not with the election itself, the Federation would be content with a minimum of five representatives on this body." The United Synagogue then suggested three representatives, and this was agreed to.

There was nothing equivocal about the letter of November 23rd, and it was perfectly clear that the continued participation of the representatives of the Federation in the proceedings of the Conference was strictly conditional. When the Conference, as its first business, passed a resolution enforcing a money franchise the mandate of the Federation representatives was clearly at an end.

Immediately following the Conference the following letter was addressed to the Secretary of the United Synagogue:

January 17, 5672-1912.

DEAR SIR.—Having regard to the proceedings at the Conference on Sunday last, we desire to

confirm the letter of November 23rd last, referring to the adequate representation of the Federation of Synagogues on the body dealing with the election of the Chief Rabbi.

We desire to protest against any mode of election dependent on the amounts contributed by any body or bodies to the Chief Rabbi's Fund.

Were the United Synagogue electing an official of its own body, or a Chief Rabbi over the various synagogues within its Union, it would be a perfectly logical course to proportion the elective power to the amount of the several contributions towards the cost of the remuneration of such officer or Chief Rabbi. The present election is not thus limited. A spiritual head for the Jews of Great Britain is to be elected.

The precedent of the last election for Chief Rabbi does not apply in this instance, for on that occasion the occupant of the office of Delegate Chief Rabbi was by a general consensus of opinion clearly marked out for the office, and the election was more or less a matter of routine.

It is not, we submit, a question of any particular body wielding a predominant influence over the election—or of one set of members "swamping" another. Under any well-conceived and logical method of representation all members of the Jewish congregations in the United Kingdom would have such a share in the election as their numbers justified;

the members of the Federation synagogues, under proportional representation, would form but a small minority of the whole; under a scheme of proportional representation a minority could fairly be expected to accept the decision of the majority, but not otherwise.

We are quite certain that the United Synagogue is desirous of electing a Chief Rabbi acceptable to every section of the community, but without having regard to the comparative smallness of the section of the community it represents, it has determined to keep the election in its own hands. The Federation of Synagogues therefore, cannot share in the responsibility of an election in which it has practically no voice.

We sincerely trust that after the United Synagogue has made its choice of a Chief Rabbi, the Federation will be able to accept him in the same spirit as in the past.

Under the present circumstances however, the Federation must withdraw from participating in the election.

Yours faithfully,
SWAYTHLING, Acting Presdent.
H. LANDAU, Vice-President.
GERALD S. MONTAGU, M. MOSES, } Treasurers.
JOSEPH E. BLANK, Secretary.

Considerable correspondence followed, but no practical method of compromise or formula has yet been propounded. It was suggested at the Conference that the contribution of the Federation synagogues to the Chief Rabbi's Fund was only £20 per annum, but finally and tardily this was corrected, and it was acknowledged that the Federation paid £140 per annum direct to this Fund. Indirectly a larger sum is contributed, but its direct contribution in proprotion to income is larger than that of the United Synagogue itself. Nevertheless, in the proposals at present before the community it is suggested that the Federation should have only 28 votes, although 75 votes are allocated to the Hon. Officers of the United Synagogue, thus vitiating the resolution of the Conference proportioning the voting power to the financial contribution.

The Federation of Synagogues has reiterated its aspiration that a worthy successor will be appointed to the office, and to its "sincere hope and belief that they will be able loyally to accept the choice of the United Synagogue."

Never was the need for a sense of corporate responsibility for communal action more essential than to-day, nor more far reaching in its probable effect for good or evil upon the communal welfare of the next generation, nay, upon the very existence of the community, as an efficient religious entity.

Though the voice which has hitherto mainly guided the Federation is stilled, its spirit is ever present, calling upon those who are now responsible for the administration of the Federation to remember his oft-repeated counsel, to compromise upon anything—*except faith and conviction.*

In concluding this review the paragraphs penned by the present writer for the closing sentences of the last and penultimate Reports, which appear upon the Minutes of the Federation of Synagogues, may, despite the efflux of time, still be regarded as appropriate:—

> "The foregoing record of the operations of the Federation of Synagogues is tangible evidence if such were needed, of the success which has happily attended the efforts of the Federation on behalf of the synagogues within its sphere, of their members and of orthodox Judaism generally. Within the Federation there is complete harmony, 'each striving for all and all for each.' Progress, numerically, socially and religiously, can be recorded of the synagogues within the Federation, and, as has already been shown, despite the fact that admission into the Federation can only be gained by the attainment of a standard satisfying public requirements. The enormous advance in synagogal life among the Jewish working-classes is not the least remarkable

feature of the last two decades, nor the only achievement to be set down to the lasting credit of the Federation and to the forethought of its founders. Through the medium of the Federation, the members, albeit they are mainly composed of the working-classes, are now possessed of an articulate voice in the affairs of the community and shall it be said that it has not been exercised with intelligence, with prudence and with moderation? Social and domestic improvement have followed in the wake of experience gained in the management of their synagogal affairs, and the corporate life of the community has been elevated in proportion. That the Federation of Synagogues has felt itself irresistibly impelled to make a stand against attacks upon the principles reverenced by its members will not be counted against it when time, the great healer and the impartial judge, will weigh up the evidence for and against. It will not be the first time that a decisive stand by the Federation against innovation—despite concurrent opposition—will have been found to have merited the approbation of the community when the verdict of time has permitted a re-consideration, free from the heat and prejudices engendered during the fray. Let this report close as it has commenced, with the expression of the fervent prayer that

peace may be restored; in the words of our sages : כל מחלקת שהיא לשם שמים סופה להתקים to the advantage of children and of the preservation intact of our Faith, as a living testimony to the Heavenly Father who has preserved us throughout the centuries.

שלום רב לאהבי תורתך ואין למו מכשול.

* * * *

"As an organisation the Federation of the Synagogues is at the parting of the ways: with the removal of the hand which guided its destinies for nearly a quarter of a century the first volume is closed. A new book is about to be opened, its pages as yet untouched, its contents largely dependent on those who are charged with the future administration of the Federation. When in the fulness of time the second volume of the history of the Federation of Synagogues comes to be written may the historian justly record that the second generation kept to the old paths, the paths traversed by their predecessors, and straying neither to the right hand nor to the left, steadfastly persevered onward, spreading the knowledge of the Divine Father who hath preserved His children throughout the generations."

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